



The Office of Water Quality (OWQ) is charged with protecting the health of Indiana's rivers, lakes, streams and wetlands. In the first four months of 2000, OWQ faced one of its most difficult challenges yet.

The White River Contamination Investigation

Throughout the first four months of 2000, OWQ assisted in an intensive investigation of the White River contamination that occurred in mid-to-late December 1999. The contamination stretched more than 50 miles from Anderson to the southwest side of Indianapolis. During the investigation, OWQ's scientific team gathered and tested more than 45,000 individual water samples. The water testing by OWQ, as well as numerous other investigative results, led to the filing of a lawsuit pending in court that alleges persons, events and pollutants responsible for the contamination of the river.

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For more information and detailed fact sheets on the White River Contamination, visit IDEM's Web site.

www.state.in.us/idem/macsfactsheets/whiteriver/

Electronic Database Integration

In late 1999, OWQ began integrating existing databases to make them Y2K

compliant and to create an integrated, user-friendly database system. OWQ is continuing to refine this database and build in Geographic Information System (GIS) uses. Once fully operational, citizens and regulated entities will be able to find detailed water quality information based on a geographic location. This allows users to find the most detailed water quality information available and get monthly reporting information from regulated entities.

E. coli Testing Program

Thanks to a specially equipped testing van put in use by OWQ this year, the dangers of E. coli are more apparent to those using Indiana's public waterways. The E. coli Mobile Testing Program was established to help local communities and county health departments determine E. coli risks in local waters used for recreational activities. The E. coli program took 650 samples from many Northern Indiana lake communities and beach areas along Lake Michigan during its first year of service.

Groundwater Quality Standards

OWQ developed groundwater quality standards for preliminary adoption by the Water Pollution Control Board. The effort sets a uniform standard for communities to gauge their water quality. While further refinement is occurring in regard to this rule, it will be the first numeric standard for Indiana groundwater, once adopted.

TMDL Team Established

OWQ has developed an approach to turn the tide on polluted waters around the state. The office established a Total Maximum Daily Load Team to systematically address the impaired waters of Indiana. This TMDL Team will develop load models for the impaired waters and eventually develop restoration plans in coordination with the watershed approach. The watershed approach will help direct the activities of the office and coordinate efforts within the larger watershed basins of the state.

www.state.in.us/idem/owm/assessbr/tmdl_program.htm

State Legislates Combined Sewer Overflow Policy

Before the mid-1900s, most cities and towns connected storm water run-off drains directly to sewer lines and piped the excess water to a wastewater treatment facility. During heavy storms, the sewer lines become overburdened by the additional load and overflow raw sewage into local waterways.



Recently, the Indiana Senate legislated for the first time that the impact of Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO) in 106 cities and towns across the state must be eliminated or minimized through the development and implementation of long-term control plans. This statute provides the agency further authority to require by law what has been only required by policy. It strengthens IDEM's enforcement authority concerning the ultimate elimination and minimization of CSO pollution.

www.state.in.us/idem/owm/facmang/wwet/csosindex.html

Small Community Mentoring Program

In Northern Indiana, a pilot grassroots effort is bringing the University of Notre Dame and the city of Elkhart expertise together to mentor nearby small communities in a prototype wastewater system education center. This effort, called the Small Community Mentoring Program, will work to resolve many common and uncommon small community wastewater treatment plant problems at the local level.



The State Revolving Fund Loan Program established a record sum and quantity of loans closed in a fiscal year. The program closed 81 loans for more than \$350 million to Indiana communities.

www.state.in.us/idem/owm/

SRF Dollars Loaned by Fiscal Year

